THE WORLD.

NUMBER II.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *January* the 11th, 1753.

IT is an obſervation of lord Bacon, " That the fame of Cicero, Seneca, " and the younger Pliny, had ſcarce " laſted to this day, or at leaſt, not " ſo freſh, if it had not been joined " with ſome vanity and boaſting in " themſelves: for boaſting ſeems to be like varniſh, that " not only makes wood ſhine but laſt."

HOW greatly are the moderns obliged to lord Bacon for giving another reaſon for the ſucceſs of the ancients, than ſuperiority of merit! Theſe gentlemen have taken care, it ſeems, to lay on their varniſh ſo extremely thick, that common wood has been miſtaken from ebony, and ebony for enamel.

BUT if the ancients owe all their reputation to their ſkill in varniſhing, as no doubt they do, it appears very wonderful, that while the art remains, it ſhould be ſo totally neglected by modern authors; eſpecially when they experience every day, that for want of this covering, the critics in the ſhape of worms have eat into their wood, and crumbled it to powder.

BUT to treat this matter plainly, and without a figure; it is moſt certainly owing to the baſhfulneſs of the moderns that their works are not held in higher eſtimation than thoſe of the ancients. And this, I think, will be as apparent as any other truth, if we conſider for a moment the nature and office of the people called critics. It is the nature of theſe people to be exceedingly dull; and it is their office to pronounce deciſively upon the merit and demerit of all works whatſoever. Thus, chuſing themſelves into the ſaid office, and happening to ſet out without taſte, talents or judgment, they have no way of gueſſing at the excellency of an author, but from what the ſaid author has been graciouſly pleaſed to ſay of it himſelf: and as moſt of the moderns are afraid of communicating to the public all that paſſes in their hearts on that ſubject, the critics, miſtaking their reſerve for a confeſſion of weakneſs, have pronounced ſentence upon their works, that they are good for nothing. Nor is it matter of wonder that they proceed in this method: for by what rule of reaſon can a man expect the good word of another, who has not a word to ſay in favour of himſelf?

TO avoid therefore the cenſure of the critics, and to engage their approbation, I the this early opportunity of aſſuring them that I have the pleaſure of ſtanding extremely

tremely high in my own opinion; and if I do not think proper to ſay with Horace,

Sublimi feriam ſidera vertice,

or with Ovid,

Jamque opus INCEPI, *quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignes,*
Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetuſtas,

it is becauſe I chuſe to temper vanity with humility; having ſometimes found, that a man may be too arrogant, as well as too humble: though it muſt always be acknowledged that in affairs of enterprize, which require ſtrength, genius, or activity, aſſurance will ſucceed where modeſty will fail.

To ſet forth the utility of blending theſe two virtues, and to exemplify in a particular inſtance the ſuperiority of the former, as I began my firſt paper with a tale, I ſhall end this with a fable.

MODESTY, the daughter of Knowledge, and ASSURANCE, the offſpring of Ignorance, met accidentally upon the road; and as both had a long way to go, and had experienced from former hardſhips, that they were alike unqualified to purſue their journey alone, they agreed, notwithſtanding the oppoſition in their natures, to lay aſide all animoſities, and for their mutual advantage, to travel together. It was in a country where there were no inns for entertainment; ſo that to their own addreſs, and to the hoſpitality of the inhabitants, they were continually to be obliged for proviſion and lodging.

ASSURANCE had never failed getting admittance to the houſes of the great; but it had frequently been her misfortune to be turned out of doors, at a time when ſhe was promiſing herſelf an elegant entertainment, or a

bed

bed of down to reſt upon. MODESTY had been excluded from all ſuch houſes, and compelled to take ſhelter in the cottages of the poor; where, though ſhe had leave to continue as long as ſhe pleaſed, a truſs of ſtraw had been her uſual bed, and roots, or the coarſeſt proviſion her conſtant repaſt. But as both, by this accidental meeting, were become friends and fellow travellers, they entertained hopes of aſſiſting each other, and of ſhortning the way by dividing the cares of it.

ASSURANCE, who was dreſſed lightly in a ſummer ſilk and ſhort petticoats, and who had ſomething commanding in her voice and preſence, found the ſame eaſy acceſs as before to the caſtles and palaces upon the way; while MODESTY, who followed her in a ruſſet gown, ſpeaking low, and caſting her eyes upon the ground, was as uſual puſhed back by the porter at the gate, till introduced by her companion; whoſe faſhionable appearance and familiar addreſs got admiſſion for both.

AND now, by the endeavours of each to ſupport the other, their difficulties vaniſhed, and they ſaw themſelves the favourites of all companies, and the parties of their pleaſures, feſtivals and amuſements. The ſallies of ASSURANCE were continually checked by the delicacy of MODESTY; and the bluſhes of MODESTY were frequently relieved by the vivacity of ASSURANCE; who, though ſhe was ſometimes detected at her old pranks, which always put her companion out of countenance, was yet ſo awed by her preſence, as to ſtop ſhort of offence.

THUS in the company of MODESTY, ASSURANCE gained that reception and eſteem, which ſhe had vainly hoped for in her abſence; while MODESTY, by means of her new acquaintance, kept the beſt company, feaſted

feaſted upon delicacies, and ſlept in the chambers of ſtate. ASSURANCE, indeed, had in one particular the aſcendancy over her companion: for if any one aſked MODESTY whoſe daughter ſhe was, ſhe bluſhed and made no anſwer; while ASSURANCE took the advantage of her ſilence, and impoſed herſelf upon the world as the offspring of Knowledge.

IN this manner did the travellers purſue their journey; ASSURANCE taking the lead through the great towns and cities, and apologizing for the ruſticity of her companion; while MODESTY went foremoſt through the villages and hamlets, and excuſed the odd behaviour of ASSURANCE by preſenting her as a courtier.

IT happened one day, after having meaſured a tedious length of road, that they came to a narrow river, which by a haſty ſwell had waſhed away the bridge that was built over it. As they ſtood upon the bank, caſting their eyes upon the oppoſite ſhore, they ſaw at a little diſtance a magnificent caſtle, and a crowd of people inviting them to come over. ASSURANCE, who ſtoped at nothing, throwing aſide the covering from her limbs, plunged almoſt naked into the ſtream, and ſwam ſafely to the other ſide. MODESTY, offended at the indecency of her companion, and diffident of her own ſtrength, would have declined the danger; but being urged by ASSURANCE, and derided for her cowardice by the people on the other ſide, ſhe unfortunately ventured beyond her depth, and oppreſſed by her fears, as well as entangled by her clothes, which were bound tightly about her, immediately diſappeared, and was driven by the current none knows whither. It is ſaid, indeed, that ſhe was afterwards taken up alive by a

fiſherman